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THE FUNERAL.

OR,

GRACE IN A CHILD.

A TRAGEDY.

By Mr. JERNINGHAM.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXXI.

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OR

GRAVE.

A

POEM.

IN IMITATION OF THE MANNER OF

MONK OF LA TRAPPE.

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ARABERT, a young eccleſiaſtic, retired to the convent of *La Trappe*, in obedience to a vow he had taken during a fit of illneſs: LEONORA, with whom he had lived in the ſtricteſt intimacy, followed her lover, and by the means of a diſguiſe, obtained admiſſion into the monaſtery, where a few days after ſhe aſſiſted at her lover's funeral.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ABARBAT, a young ecclesiastic, retired to the convent of La Trappe, in obedience to a vow he had taken during a fit of illness: LEONORA, with whom he had lived in the fondest intimacy, followed her lover, and by the means of a disguise, obtained admission into the monastery, where a few days after she sunk at her lover's funeral.

THE

FUNERAL, &c.

FAIR LEONORA, by affliction led,
Sought the dread dome where ſleep the hallow'd dead:
The ſolemn edifice was wrapt around,
In midnight darkneſs, and in peace profound:
A ſolitary lamp, with languid light,
Serv'd not to chaſe, but to diſcloſe the night:
Serv'd to diſcloſe (of all her grief the ſource,)
The tomb that gap'd for ARABERTUS' corſe:
To this, ſhe ſent the deep, the frequent ſigh,
And ſpoke—the tear juſt gath'ring in her eye.

'Doom'd to receive all that my ſoul holds dear,
'Give him that reſt his heart refus'd him here:
'Oh ſcreen him from the pain the tender know,
'The train of ſorrows that from paſſion flow;
'And to his envied new-born ſtate adjoin,
'(Or all is vain) an ignorance of mine.'

As thus ſhe mourn'd, an aged prieſt drew near,
(Whoſe pure life glided as the riv'let clear,)
The virtuous ANSELM.—Tho' in cloiſters bred,
Still bright-ey'd Wiſdom to his cell he led:
From paths of ſophiſtry he lov'd to ſtray,
To tread the walk where Nature led the way.
The prior's rank he long had held approv'd,
Eſteem'd, rever'd, and as a parent lov'd:
Unskilful in the jargon of the ſchools,
He knew humanity's diviner rules:
To others gentle, to himſelf ſevere,
On ſorrow's wound he dropt the healing tear.

In all the negligence of grief he found,
The fair extended on the naked ground.

Touch'd at her woe the ſacred father ſaid,
'Well may'ſt thou droop if happineſs be fled:
'Sure, if at holy ARABERT's deceaſe,
'Impetuous ſorrows ruſh upon thy peace,
'Some much-lov'd friend in him you muſt deplore,
'Or, dearer ſtill, a brother is no more:
'Yet, as thro' life our weary ſteps we bend,
'Let us not ſink when beating ſtorms deſcend:
'Still let Religion hold unrival'd ſway,
'And Patience walk companion of our way.
'Ah, loſe not ſight of that delightful ſhore,
'Whoſe bliſsful bow'rs ſhall friends to friends reſtore:
'Tho' here misfortune comes to blaſt our will,
'The Heav'ns are juſt, and God a Father ſtill.

'Bleſt be the voice, the riſing mourner ſaid,
'That bids Affliction raiſe her drooping head:

'That bids me hope (beyond ev'n Death's domain,)
'Theſe eyes ſhall banquet on my love again.
'Ah, ſtart not ANSELM—for to truth allied,
'Impiety now throws her mask aſide:
'No holy monk by contemplation led,
'To theſe ſequeſtered manſions of the dead;
'No youth devoted to Religion's pow'r,
'Implores thy pity at this awful hour.—
'The guilty ſecret—I'll at length unfold—
'In me—(forgive) a woman you behold.
'Ah fly me not, let mercy now prevail,
'And deign to mark my ſad diſaſtrous tale.'

'Known to misfortune from my tender years,
'My parent's aſhes drank my early tears:
'A barb'rous uncle to each vice allied,
'The office of a parent ill ſupplied:
'Of my entire inheritance poſſeſs'd,
'By lucre prompted, and by fortune bleſt,

' He paſs'd the ocean never to return,
' And left me weeping o'er my parents' urn:
' Then ARABERT the gen'rous ſtranger came,
' To ſooth my ſorrows, and relieve my ſhame:
' Beneath his tender care, my woes decreas'd,
' More than Religion's, he was Pity's prieſt:
' To reach his bounty my affection ſtrove,
' Till gratitude was heighten'd into love:
' Nor he at length refus'd the lover's part,
' The pity that adorn'd, betray'd his heart.
' How ardently he wiſh'd the nuptial rite,
' In holy wedlock, might our hands unite:
' But ſtern Religion at our vows exclaim'd,
' And tore the bands that Love and Nature fram'd:
' For then devoted to her hallow'd ſhrine,
' His country's laws forbad him to be mine.
' Tho' from my mind each flatt'ring thought retir'd,
' And in my boſom, hope and peace expir'd;
' Yet on their ruins, love triumphant roſe:
' Enough—ſhame o'er the reſt a mantle throws:

' At length Remorſe effaced the guilty ſcene,
' And to his breaſt apply'd her dagger keen;
' Reſtrain'd in full career the erring youth,
' And led him back to Innocence and Truth:
' 'Twas then he fled from Pleaſure's roſy bow'rs,
' To woo Religion in theſe gloomy tow'rs:
' Yet ere he fled, my bliſs he fondly plann'd,
' And ſcatter'd riches with a laviſh hand:
' Ah, what to me avail'd the golden ſtore?
' The giver gone, the gift cou'd charm no more.

' While in the gloom his tedious abſence paſt,
' My former life in fancy I repaſs'd,
' Repentance gain'd admiſſion to my breaſt,
' Nor did it enter an unwelcome gueſt:
' For ne'er to Pleaſure I diſmiſs'd the rein
' Free and unconſcious of reflection's pain;
' If hapleſs LEONORA lov'd too well,
' Content, fair Virtue's friend, with Virtue fell:

'But not my ſtubborn ſoul cou'd pray'r ſubdue,
'Ev'n grafted on remorſe my paſſion grew;
'Too fatal paſſion—by its impulſe led,
'In man's attire to this retreat I fled:
'Yet then, ev'n then to baſhful fear allied,
'Still o'er my love did modeſty preſide.
'In thoſe ſweet moments that precede the night;
'When peaceful Nature wears a ſoften'd light,
'I met the youth within the ſolemn grove,
'(His frequent walk) abſorb'd in heav'nly love:
'I ſtrove to ſpeak, but words refus'd to flow,
'And, fix'd, I ſtood a monument of woe:
'While God and he employ the trembling ſcene,
'Twere ſacrilege, I thought, to ruſh between:
'Still from that hour my wiſhes I reſtrain'd,
'And in my breaſt th' unwilling ſecret chain'd:
'Unknown to him, yet half-content I grew,
'So that his form might daily charm my view:
'Think how miſguided by your guileleſs heart,
'You took for virtue, what in me was art,

' And highly honor'd with applauding ſtrain,
' The zeal that join'd Religion's ſober train,
' Unknowing that the call thou did'ſt approve,
' And all my virtue, all my zeal was love:
' But new Affliction, with relentleſs hand,
' O'erthrew the project that my heart had plann'd:
' Amid the horrors of the loneſome night,
' A ghaſtly ſpectre ruſh'd upon my ſight,
' And pour'd theſe accents on my trembling ear,'
Think not impiety ſhall triumph here:
Thy hopes are blaſted—Death's tremendous bell
Shall ſound, ere many hours, thy lover's knell:
' I ſtarted from my couch, with fright impreſs'd,
' And anxious doubts were buſy in my breaſt:
' By love then prompted—yet by love diſmay'd,
' The peopled choir I tremblingly ſurvey'd;
' Still mid th' innumerous monaſtic train,
' Theſe eyes ſolicited his form in vain:
' Nor in the field or penſive grove retir'd
' Could I diſcover whom my heart requir'd:

'Then ſure (I cried) at this unhappy hour
'Does anguiſh o'er his cell diffuſe its pow'r:
'Shall LEONORA not relieve his pain,
'And with theſe arms his drooping head ſuſtain?
'Say, at the couch, when death is ſtalking round,
'Shall not the ſpouſe of his fond heart be found!
'Ah no—th' affection that ſubdues me ſtill,
'At that dread moment check'd my ardent will,
'Leſt ruſhing on his ſight I ſhould control
'The holy thoughts that hover'd o'er his ſoul.

'This low'ring morn diſclos'd the fatal truth;
'Oh early loſt—oh lov'd—oh hapleſs youth—
'Fix'd to the column of the hallow'd porch—
'Twas ſcarcely light—ſome fury lent her torch—
'I read—

The pious ARABERT's *no more,*
The peace the dead require, for him implore:

'Let peace, let joy, (I ſaid) his ſpirit join,
'Nor joy, nor peace muſt e'er encircle mine:

'Lamented youth! too tenderly allied,
'In vain you fled me, and in vain you died,
'Still to your image, which this breaſt inurns,
'My conſtant heart a lamp perpetual burns.

'But thou, to whom as friend he did impart
'Each latent wiſh, and foible of the heart;
'For well I know, where Sorrow drops her tear,
'Or Miſery complains, thou ſtill art near;
'Ah ſay, by love did my idea dreſt,
'Come to his mind thus welcome, thus careſt?
'Or on his ſoul come ruſhing undeſir'd
'The fatal fair, by female arts inſpir'd,
'Who dimm'd the luſtre of his radiant name,
'And from his temples tore the flow'r of fame:
'Who thro' the labyrinth of Pleaſure's bow'r
'Allur'd (for beauty ſuch as mine had pow'r)
'Ev'n to the dang'rous ſteep—and caſt him down
'From high repute to grov'ling diſrenown:

'Wretch that I am, to my diſtreſsful ſtate
'There wanted not th' addition of his hate:
'For him I plung'd my artleſs youth in ſhame,
'Unlock'd reſerve, and ſacrificed my fame:
'Still, ſtill I fear (unable to confide,)
'Before my ARABERT, the lover died:
'This thought (to thee I'll own) ſuſpends my grief,
'While cold indifference comes to my relief:
'Say virtuous ANSELM, if this thought be vain,
'And give, Oh give me all my grief again.

To her replied the pity-breathing ſeer,
'Mark well my words, and loſe thy idle fear:
'When on the couch of Death, the victim lay,
'Not in that moment was his friend away:
'As at his ſide I took my mournful ſtand,
'With feeble graſp he ſeiz'd my offer'd hand;
'And thus began.—"The fatal dart is ſped,
"Soon, ſoon ſhall ARABERT encreaſe the dead:

" 'Tis well—for what can added life beſtow,
" But days returning ſtill with added woe:
" Say, have I not ſecluded from my ſight,
" The lovely object of my paſt delight?
" Ah, had I too dethron'd her from my mind,
" When here the holy brotherhood I join'd,
" Remorſe wou'd not, encreaſing my diſeaſe,
" Prey on my ſoul, and rob it of its eaſe:
" And yet I ſtrove unequal to the part,
" Weak to perform the ſacrifice of heart:
" And now, ev'n now, too feeble to control,
" I feel her clinging to my parting ſoul:"
' He ſpoke—(my ſympathetic boſom bled,)
' And to the realms of Death his ſpirit fled.

The fair rejoin'd: ' Miſled by foul diſtruſt,
' To him, whoſe heart was mine, am I unjuſt?
' Ah, ARABERT, th' unwilling fault forgive,
' Dead to th' alluring world, in thee I live:

'My thoughts, my deep regret, my ſorrows own,
'No view, no object ſtill but thee alone:
'At all the vengeance burſting from above,
'Alarm'd, I weep, I ſhudder, yet I love:'

As thus ſhe ſpoke, the death-bell ſmote her ear,
While to the porch the fun'ral train drew near:
Ah, LEONORE in that tremendous hour,
Did'ſt thou not feel all Heav'n's avenging pow'r,
When moving thro' the iſle, the choral band,
And veſted prieſts, with torches in their hand,
Gave to thy view, unfortunately dear,
Thy lover ſleeping on th' untimely bier?

Collecting now at length her ſcatter'd force,
With trembling footſteps ſhe approach'd the corſe,
And while ſhe check'd the conflict in her breaſt,
The wide-encircling throng ſhe thus addreſs'd:
'Well may ye mark me with aſtoniſh'd eyes,
'Audacious hypocrite in man's diſguiſe;

'Who urg'd by paſſion, dar'd with ſteps profane,
'Approach the hallow'd dome of Virtue's train:
'Lead me, ah lead me to the dungeon's gloom,
'The rack prepare—I yield me to your doom:
'Yet ſtill ſhou'd Pity in your breaſt abide,
'And Pity ſure to Virtue is allied:
'To my diſtreſs benign attention lend,
'Your acts of rigor for a while ſuſpend,
'Till o'er this bier ('tis Nature's kind relief,)
'I've pour'd my plaints, and pay'd the rites of grief:
'Ah, he was dearer to this bleeding heart
'Far dearer than expreſſion can impart.

'Thou who didſt place us in this vale of tears,
'Where ſorrow blaſts the plant that pleaſure rears:
'If, as the tenets of our creed require,
'Thy waken'd juſtice breathes immortal ire;
'If love, from whence ev'n here misfortunes flow,
'Beyond the grave you curſe with endleſs woe?

'Ah not o'er ARABERT thy vengeance ſpread!
'On me, on me thy darts of anger ſhed!
'For I allur'd him far from Virtue's way,
'And led his youthful innocence aſtray:
'Ah not in puniſhment our fate conjoin,
'He ſhar'd the rapture, but the guilt was mine.'

With trembling hand ſhe now the veil withdrew, *
When lo the well-known features ſtruck her view:
Abſorpt in grief ſhe caſt a fond ſurvey—
At length her thoughts in murmurs broke away:
'That eye—which ſhed on mine voluptuous light,
'Alas how ſunk in everlaſting night?
'See from thoſe lips the living colour fled,
'Where Love reſided, and where Pleaſure fed!
'And where bright Eloquence had pour'd her ſtore,
'Dumb Horror ſits—and Wiſdom is no more:
'Yet ere the worm (ſince this is doom'd its prey)
'Shall ſteal the ling'ring likeneſs quite away,

* 'Tis uſual to bury the monks of La Trappe in their monaſtic habit extended on a plank.

'On that cold lip ſure LEONORE may dwell,
'And, free from guilt, imprint the long farewell!'
She added not—but bending low her head,
Three times the mourner kiſs'd th' unconſcious dead.

Now holy ANSELM urg'd her to reſtrain
Her boundleſs grief in rev'rence of the fane:
She anſwer'd, ſtarting from the ſable bier,
'Can I forget that ARABERT was dear!
'Can I, cold monitor, from hence remove,
'His worth unrival'd, and his laſting love!
'Can I forget, as deſtitute I lay,
'To ſickneſs, grief, and penury a prey,
'How eagerly he flew at Pity's call,
'Put forth his hand and rais'd me from my fall!
'All unſolicited he gave me wealth,
'He gave me ſolace, and he gave me health;
'And, dearer than the bliſs thoſe gifts impart,
'He ſtrain'd me to his breaſt, and gave his heart:

'And shall these hallow'd walls and awful fane,
'Reproach the voice that pours the praiseful strain?
'Shy at the friend's, the guardian's, lover's tomb,
'Can sorrow sleep, and gratitude be dumb?
'But I submit—and bend thus meekly low,
'To kiss th' avenging hand that dealt the blow:
'Resign'd I quit the losing path I trod,
'Fall'n is my idol—and I worship God.'
She ceas'd—the choir intones the funeral song,
Which holy echoes plaintively prolong:
And now the solemn organ, tun'd to woe,
Pour'd the clear notes pathetically flow:
These rites perform'd—along th' extending fane,
She now attends the slow-proceeding train;
Who o'er the mournful cypress-shaded way,
To the expecting tomb, the dead convey:
See now the priests, the closing act prepare,
And to the darksome vault commit their care:
At this dread scene, too feelingly distress'd,
She pour'd the last effusions of her breast.

'Come dove-like peace, to watch this ſacred ſhrine,
'And brood inceſſant, with a love like mine.'
She paus'd—then (o'er the yawning tomb reclin'd)
In all the tenderneſs of grief rejoin'd:
'Oh beauty's flow'r—oh pleaſure ever new—
'Oh friendſhip, love, and conſtancy adieu:
'Ye virtues that adorn'd th' unhappy youth,
'Affection, pity, confidence, and truth,
'The gen'rous thoughts that with the feeling dwell,
'And ſympathy of heart—farewell, farewell!
'Not all of ARABERT this tomb contains,
'All is not here while LEONORE remains:
'Methinks, ſolicitous my form to meet,
'The conſcious aſhes heave beneath my feet:
'Methinks a voice ev'n animates the clay,
'And in low accents ſummons me away:
'Haſte LEONORE—thy other ſelf rejoin,
'And let thy glowing aſhes mix with mine:
'Ah, truſt me ARABERT! to ſhare thy doom,
'Prepar'd, reſolv'd, I'll meet thee in the tomb:

'Forbear, Oh Heav'n, in pity to theſe tears,
'To curſe my ſorrow with a length of years.

'And when this drooping form ſhall preſs the bier,
'Say virtuous ANSELM, wilt thou not be near?
'The friendly requiem for my ſoul to crave,
'And lay theſe limbs in this lamented grave?
'Then when this tortur'd heart ſhall ceaſe to burn,
'Our blended duſt ſhall warm the faithful urn:
'Nor diſtant far is that releaſing hour,
'For Nature now oppreſs'd beyond her pow'r,
'Reſigns at length, my troubled ſoul to reſt,
'And Grief's laſt anguiſh ruſhes thro' my breaſt.

Behold her now extended on the ground,
And ſee the ſacred brethren kneeling round:
Then ſhe addreſſes in a fault'ring tone,
'Say, cannot Death my daring crime atone?
'Ah, let compaſſion now your heart inſpire,
'Amid your pray'rs, I unalarm'd expire.

'Thou who art ev'n in this dread moment dear,
'Oh, shade of ARABERT, still hover near.
'I come.'—
—And now emerging from her weeds,
('Twas Love's last effort) from the earth she rose;
And, strange to tell, with strong affection fraught,
She headlong plung'd into the gloomy vault;
And there, what her impassion'd wish requir'd,
On the lov'd breast of ARABERT expir'd.